

Democrats Call on Republicans to Ensure America Pays Its Bills

Today, Republicans are wasting taxpayers' time and money by bringing a debt limit extension to the Floor that they intend to defeat. Rather than working with Democrats to ensure America pays its bills and lay out a responsible plan to reduce the deficit, Republicans have put forward this political stunt.

*"The U.S. House will vote next week on a measure to raise the nation's \$14.3 trillion debt ceiling without spending cuts, a test vote **meant by its backers to fail** and signal that fiscal changes are needed to win Republican support for raising the borrowing limit."* [Bloomberg, [05/24/11](#)]

*"Republicans have scheduled a vote next week on hiking the debt ceiling without accompanying spending cuts — **an exercise that's largely theater**."* [Politico, [05/27/11](#)]

*"House Republicans said Tuesday that they would allow a vote next week on an increase in the federal debt ceiling with no strings attached, **in order to see it defeated...**"* [NY Times, [05/25/11](#)]

Republicans talk about the need to give businesses certainty— but this vote will not do that. While business leaders, economists and Wall Street executives voice concerns about failing to raise the debt limit, Republicans continue to put the economy at risk.

From the NY Times: *"...beyond this week, Wall Street has reason to be nervous as Congress nears the actual deadline on Aug. 2 to raise the \$14.3 trillion borrowing ceiling...Investors have grown accustomed to partisan games of chicken that always end with the needed increase in the government's borrowing authority. But this showdown, many say, is riskier because of the strongly held antispending, antitax views of the many freshman House Republicans combined with the fragility of the economic recovery."* [[05/31/11](#)]

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke: *"I think using the debt limit as a bargaining chip is quite risky... Failure to raise the debt limit would 'at minimum' lead to 'an increase in interest rates, which would actually worsen our deficit and would hurt all borrowers in the economy.'"* [Bloomberg, [05/12/11](#)]

Martin Regalia, Chief Economist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce: *"If they are really committed to suggesting that we could see an expiration of the debt limit with no real negative consequences and that somehow that would generate exigency to get a longer run solution, I'd really like to see the logic spelled out because I really don't follow it at all."* [Dow Jones, [05/27/11](#)]

R. Bruce Josten, chief lobbyist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce: *"This debate has moved into a different realm," said R. Bruce Josten... His organization and other business groups have*

been working to persuade Republicans not to hold up debt ceiling legislation... Josten and other business leaders have been conducting a low-profile but intense lobbying effort to bring aboard skeptical conservatives in Congress, many of whom the business groups backed financially in last year's election." [LA Times, [04/19/11](#)]

Jamie Dimon, Chairman and CEO of JPMorgan Chase & Co: *"If the United States actually defaults on our debt, it would be catastrophic... If anyone wants to push that button ... they're crazy."* [Bloomberg, [04/19/11](#)]

Douglas Holtz-Eakin, the president of the American Action Forum and former CBO Director: *"What markets typically dislike the most is uncertainty... The more it drags out, the greater that impact will be, and that's not a good thing."* [The Hill, [4/12/11](#)]

Even Republican leaders have acknowledged that we must ensure America pays its bills.

Speaker John Boehner: *"Boehner and his team will have to convince Republicans that it really is in their best interest to go along with something they vowed, as candidates, to oppose. 'This is going to be probably the first really big adult moment' for the new Republican majority, Boehner told me. 'You can underline 'adult.' And for people who've never been in politics it's going to be one of those growing moments. It's going to be difficult, I'm certainly well aware of that. But we'll have to find a way to help educate members and help people understand the serious problem that would exist if we didn't do it."* [The New Yorker, [12/13/10](#)]

Budget Chairman Paul Ryan: *"Some conservative Republicans have urged their GOP colleagues to resist raising the ceiling -- which currently clocks in at \$14.3 trillion -- under any circumstances. Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota is collecting signatures on her PAC's website 'to force our elected officials to stop spending cold turkey,' and Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina has advocated for a 'big showdown' with Democrats by blocking the raise. But House Budget Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan says that tactic isn't viable. 'Just refusing to vote for it, I don't think that's really a strategy,' he said, noting that a failure to raise the ceiling could result in the nation defaulting on its debts to investors. 'Will the debt ceiling be raised? Does it have to be raised? Yes,' he said at an event sponsored by economics21 and the Manhattan Institute at the National Press Club Thursday."* [MSNBC, [1/6/11](#)]

House Republican Conference Chairman Jeb Hensarling: *"Both House Republican Conference Chairman Jeb Hensarling (Texas) and Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) said on CNN's "State of the Union" that not raising the debt ceiling is not an option - although they disagree on how future budgets should address closing the budget gap. 'What I do think is, yes, it would be catastrophic to have the nation default upon its debt,' Hensarling said."* [Hill, [4/10/11](#)]

It's time for Republicans to stop holding the economy hostage by suggesting we may not pay our bills. Democrats stand ready and willing to work together to meet our debt obligations and move forward with a bipartisan plan to reduce the deficit and grow the economy.